

Bulimia

Stark County Health Department
Community Nutrition Clinic
3969 Convenience Circle NW
Canton, Ohio 44718
330.493.9917

WHAT IS BULIMIA?

Bulimia is an eating disorder characterized by a cycle of “binge” eating followed by “purging” the body of calories.

A binge is different for each person. One person might consider a binge to be up to 20,000 calories. Another person might consider one cookie to be a binge.



A bulimic may purge her body of the calories by vomiting, exercising excessively, starving herself, or using laxatives, diuretics or enemas.

Bulimics usually suffer from low self-esteem. They want to please others but hide their own feelings. They use food for comfort and to feel in control of their lives.

continues

continued

Often, bulimics are of normal weight and accurately assess their body size. But they usually recognize their problem eating behaviors. They are more likely to seek help than anorexics.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF BULIMIA?

Symptoms of bulimia include:

- periods of eating large amounts of food, followed by purging the food from the body
- eating in secret
- consuming high-calorie foods during binging
- feeling lack of control over eating behaviors
- excessive concern about body size, shape, and weight
- changes in monthly periods
- cavities
- sore throat and sinus infections
- stomach disorders and discomfort
- broken blood vessels in eyes or face
- blurred vision
- depressive moods or mood swings

continues

continued

HOW CAN BULIMICS GET BETTER?

Bulimics can and do get better! With the help of psychological and dietary counseling, bulimics can return to normal eating patterns.

You can embark on a path that will help you to learn to like your body image. You can learn to ignore cultural norms for what an attractive body is. Remember: being and looking healthy—not being too thin—can make you feel more attractive than ever!

But you are more than just your body. You have a lot of value as a person. There are many special things about you to love. You should remind yourself of your wonderful qualities whenever you are feeling depressed.

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN I AM GETTING BETTER?

Indications that you are recovering from bulimia include:

- You eat a variety of foods to obtain all essential nutrients.
- You eat a normal amount of calories.
- You have normal eating patterns.
- You do not vomit or use other methods to get rid of calories.
- Your menstruation has returned to normal.
- Your skin and hair growth are normal.
- Your dental health has improved.
- You accept normal and temporary weight shifts.
- You can recognize and respond to hunger.

continues

continued

- You spend much less—in fact, little—time thinking about food, hunger, and weight.
- You avoid excessive exercise.
- You are comfortable eating with others.

NOTES: